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THE WASHINGTON STAR  
5 September 1979

## Vance Faces Questions on Soviet Troops

By Vernon A. Guidry Jr.  
Washington Star Staff Writer

Senate Foreign Relations Chairman Frank Church has postponed SALT II hearings in order to question Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, CIA Director Stansfield Turner and others today on reports that 2,000 to 3,000 Soviet combat troops are in Cuba.

Vance has scheduled a noon news conference on the issue that has suddenly handed President Carter a new controversy in U.S.-Soviet relations, one that could have implications for the chances of Senate ratification of the strategic arms limitation treaty with the Soviet Union.

The foreign relations panel is scheduled to conclude its work on the treaty by the end of the month. Church said yesterday that the Soviet combat forces in Cuba presented an issue "that demanded the committee's immediate attention." His questioning of Vance and Turner was to be behind closed doors.

The Idaho Democrat said the United States "cannot permit the Soviets to establish a military base on Cuban soil, nor can we allow Cuba to be used as a springboard for real or threatened Russian military intervention in the Western Hemisphere."

After first denying the presence of such forces, the administration acknowledged last week that a closer look confirmed the combat troops were on the island.

The State Department has said this does not violate the 1962 agreement on the Soviets' presence in Cuba worked out when the United States forced Soviet missiles off the island.

But the United States has asked the Soviet Union for an explanation of the troops' presence, which has apparently included maneuvers.

The potential linkage between SALT and this issue has already been supplied by Sen. Richard Stone, D-Fla., who raised the first public questions about the increase in Soviet forces on the island.

In July, during hearings on the arms pact before the foreign relations committee, Stone raised the question of whether the Soviet Union was, through a variety of questionable activities, eroding the 1962 agreement that grew out of what was called the Cuban missile crisis.

"I want to be reassured," he told the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "that there have been no violations that we have (ignored) because if there have been, what good is verification with regard to SALT?"

He also wondered if the addition of combat troops to the Soviet advisers who had long been in Cuba constituted "a direct or indirect effort to establish a military base."

In response to these concerns, Vance wrote Stone in July to reaffirm that it was "the policy of the United States to oppose any efforts, direct or indirect, by the Soviet Union to establish military bases in the Western Hemisphere."

Vance went on to say, however, that "apart from a military group that has been advising the Cuban armed forces for 15 years or more, our intelligence does not warrant the conclusion that there are any other significant Soviet forces in Cuba."

Last Friday that public assessment changed. A State Department spokesman said that the government had "recently confirmed" for the first time that Soviet combat forces were on the island with some elements in place since 1976.